

104TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 3352

To award a congressional gold medal to representatives of Varian Fry in recognition of the tremendous effort he made at great personal risk to secure the escape of thousands of trapped Jewish artists, writers, and intellectuals from the Nazis in Europe and the greatly detrimental treatment he received at the hands of the United States Government as a result.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 30, 1996

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Banking and Financial Services

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## A BILL

To award a congressional gold medal to representatives of Varian Fry in recognition of the tremendous effort he made at great personal risk to secure the escape of thousands of trapped Jewish artists, writers, and intellectuals from the Nazis in Europe and the greatly detrimental treatment he received at the hands of the United States Government as a result.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; FINDINGS.**

2 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the  
3 “Varian Fry Gold Medal Act”.

4 (b) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

5 (1) In 1935, Varian Fry, an American scholar  
6 and editor, traveled to Germany to witness the Third  
7 Reich.

8 (2) Varian Fry returned from Germany greatly  
9 concerned about the plight of refugees.

10 (3) After Germany invaded Poland in 1939,  
11 Mr. Fry raised funds to bring refugees from Nazism  
12 to America but he was particularly concerned about  
13 the fate of thousands of artists, writers, and intellec-  
14 tuals who were trapped in France after the estab-  
15 lishment of the collaborationist Vichy government.

16 (4) Determined to help these trapped artists,  
17 writers, and intellectuals, in 1940 Mr. Fry secured  
18 a passport and 200 visas from a reluctant United  
19 States Department of State and traveled to Mar-  
20 seilles, France.

21 (5) Mr. Fry’s mission, which was expected to  
22 last only a few weeks, was to help no more than 200  
23 endangered Jewish intellectuals escape the Nazi re-  
24 gime.

1           (6) Posing as a relief worker, Mr. Fry secured  
2           passports and visas for almost 4,000 Jews and inge-  
3           niously smuggled them out of France.

4           (7) 14 months later Mr. Fry was forced to leave  
5           France when the United States Department of  
6           State, furious that he had countermanded his orders  
7           to help only a small number of people, revoked his  
8           passport.

9           (8) After Mr. Fry's return to the United States,  
10          he condemned the restrictive immigration policies of  
11          the United States which were greatly hindering the  
12          effort to help the victims of the Nazis escape from  
13          Europe.

14          (9) His dissent with regard to these policies  
15          prompted the Federal Bureau of Investigation to  
16          open a file on Mr. Fry which virtually prevented him  
17          from ever again working for the United States Gov-  
18          ernment.

19          (10) Unable to secure a good position, and  
20          largely ignored by those whose lives he had saved,  
21          Varian Fry died in 1967 while writing a book about  
22          his wartime experiences.

23          (11) Shortly before his death, Mr. Fry was  
24          awarded the Croix de Chevalier de la Legion

1 d'Honneur by the French Government which was  
2 the only recognition he received before his death.

3 (12) Varian Fry was posthumously honored by  
4 Yad Vasham as one of the “righteous among na-  
5 tions” in a ceremony attended by Secretary of State  
6 Warren Christopher and Mr. Fry’s life has been the  
7 subject of an exhibition at the Holocaust Museum in  
8 Washington, DC.

9 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

10 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The President is  
11 authorized to present, on behalf of the Congress, to the  
12 representatives of the late Varian Fry a gold medal of ap-  
13 propriate design, in recognition of the tremendous effort  
14 he made at great personal risk to secure the escape of  
15 thousands of trapped Jewish artists, writers, and intellec-  
16 tuals from the Nazis in Europe.

17 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the  
18 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary  
19 of the Treasury shall strike a gold medal with suitable em-  
20 blems, devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the  
21 Secretary.

22 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATION.—Effective  
23 October 1, 1996, there are authorized to be appropriated  
24 not to exceed \$25,000 to carry out this section.

1 **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

2 (a) STRIKING AND SALE.—The Secretary of the  
3 Treasury may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the  
4 gold medal struck pursuant to section 1 under such regu-  
5 lations as the Secretary may prescribe, at a price sufficient  
6 to cover the cost thereof, including labor, materials, dies,  
7 use of machinery, and overhead expenses, and the cost of  
8 the gold medal.

9 (b) REIMBURSEMENT OF APPROPRIATION.—The ap-  
10 propriation used to carry out section 2 shall be reimbursed  
11 out of the proceeds of sales under subsection (a).

12 **SEC. 4. NATIONAL MEDALS.**

13 The medals struck pursuant to this Act are national  
14 medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United  
15 States Code.

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